



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund



OPTITRANS THESSALY PEER REVIEW 9 - 11 JULY 2019

REPORT

Version 1
Date: 16 November 2018

Peer reviews

Each region/country will be peer reviewed by a small group of other regions/countries

- *Who: 4-5 persons representing different partner territories (OptiTrans project managers and external stakeholders)*
- *Preparatory half-day training in Berlin (4th September 2018)*
- *Before the visit:*
 - *team members get to know each other and exchange via Skype or similar*
 - *baseline study provided by reviewed partner as starting point*
- *During the visit...*
 - *arrival day dinner with local project manager and selected stakeholders*
 - *interviews and small workshops with local stakeholders (minimum: researcher, business representative, public authority representative) and those responsible for the implementation (management) of the selected policy*
 - *review team may split up to cover more*
 - *final day: public presentation and discussion of peer review findings*
- *After the visit:*
 - *team review members elaborate a joint report summarising the review*
 - *production of recommendations for the reviewed territory/partner*
 - *side effects include better knowledge about another partner territory's good practices and challenges – and possibilities to transfer successful approaches*

*Following the peer review visit, a comprehensive written report should summarize the review's implementation, describe the learning effects of the participants and give recommendations to the policy actors of the visited and reviewed territory. The report is elaborated under the responsibility of the peer review team leader, usually a member of the OptiTrans project team, with all other peer review team members as well as the project manager of the local partner in the reviewed territory contributing. Those having participated in peer review visits will brief the local project manager and their own Stakeholder Support Group about their findings abroad to share their learning. The report is drafted in English language and **must be available at the latest four weeks following the peer review. Its length should be around 10 pages (content, without index, open page, etc.) and photos and presentations used during the visit should be added as an appendix.***

A Peer review team

Brief presentation of the peer review team members:

	<p>Klaus Bongartz, Erfurt (Germany) <u>OptiTrans technical project responsible. Project Partner</u></p> <p>Born in 1967. Dr. rer.nat. 1990--1996 Study of Geography at the Rheinischen-Friedrich- Wilhelms-Universität Bonn. 2001 PhD in Geoinformatics at the Friedrich-Schiller University Jena. Since 2009 Referent at the Thuringian Ministry of Infrastructure and Agriculture, Service Agency Demographic Change and EU-Projects. Lead Partner of Interreg B Projects EURUFU, ADAPT2DC and SubNodes and of the Interreg Europe Project OptiTrans. Fluency in English language; experience in Geoinformatics, demographic change and public transport activities.</p>
	<p>Gonzalo Esteban López OptiTrans technical project responsible</p> <p>Educational background as Physician, Astrophysics. Previous experience as private consultant, and working in the Energy Agency of Granada as Sustainable Energy Expert for the last 15 years on projects related to energy audits, renewable energy installation promotion, sustainable transport studies, sustainable urban development plans, active mobility, efficient public lighting, detection of renewable energies resources, etc.; supporting municipalities to realize the aforementioned tasks.</p>
	<p>María Isabel Fiestas Carpena Interreg OptiTrans Stakeholder. Interreg Europe TRAM Project manager on the side of Public Works Agency of the Andalusia Regional Government. Educational background as Civil Engineer. Working in the Agency since 2007, as part of the technical assistance team for the Mobility General Directorate of the Regional Government, involving a wide range of areas going from Trams to bike networks. Responsible for the managing of sustainable urban and mobility Research Projects carried out by different Andalusia Universities, partially financed from European funds, during the period 2011-2015. Previous experience of 7 years in the private sector, involved in urban development plans, including both projects drafting and implementation works management.</p>
	<p>Ananta Ardelean Communication Expert in OptiTrans Project Communication Specialist in the Communication and Public Relations Department of the Association. The representative's attributions include promoting the public transport system, communication with project partners, stakeholders of the project and with other members of the <Baia Mare Metropolitan Area> Association, and any other person of interest to the Association. Educational background: Legal adviser. E-mail: ananta.fabian@zmbm.ro</p>

	<p>Simona Fabian Representative of Baia Mare City Hall, which is a stakeholder in the OptiTrans Project. Counsellor for Baia Mare City Hall - Projects and Strategies Department, and also Project Manager on EU funded projects implemented by the institution. Educational background: Engineer. E-mail: simona.fabian@baiamare.ro</p>
	<p>Rein Haak, Tartu (Estonia) Born in June of 1960. Higher education (MSc) from Estonian University of Life Sciences – Agronomy, Environmental protection. Rein is working in Tartu City Government since 1999 (head of the environmental service) and from 2001 acting as a head of department of communal services. Responsibility areas: public transportation, traffic, greenery, waste management, environmental issues, public lighting, administration of roads, city cleaning. In last decade involved in different transport related EU projects: BusTrip, Baltic Biogas Bus, Active Access, BSR Electric, SmartEnCity , CyclUrban, SUMBA, OptiTrans fulfilling different tasks.</p>
	<p>Lorenzo Rossi (Expert of Abruzzo Region) Financial manager for Abruzzo Region - Europrojecting Department Accountant – Business consultant - Advisor Expert in financial strategies, accounting, import export, enviromental practice for private companies and public Institutions. Sectors: EU project Financial competition Financial Consultancy Project Planning Business Planning ISO consultancy (emas, iso 9000, iso 14000) Personal contact e-mail: lorenzorossi.ipacbc@gmail.com</p>

	<p>Fabio Ruggeri (Abruzzo Region) Financial Project Junior for Abruzzo Region in the OptiTrans Project. Private consultant expert in EU Cohesion Policy; External Expert for the Abruzzo Region in several international projects founded through Interreg Programs. Educational background: Political Science, International relations. Email: fabioruggeri.ipacbc@gmail.com</p>
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Background

The region of Thessaly connects North, South, East and West. Thessaly is an important transport hub for Greece. Important segments of the primary national road and rail networks pass through (parts of TEN-T core networks). The seaport of Volos, is part of TEN-T comprehensive network.

The road network of Thessaly is consisted by:

- a significant segment of the national motorway, Motorway 1 also known as PATHE (Patra – Athens – Thessaloniki – Evzonoï) which passes through almost the entire mainland
- parts of the primary and secondary national road network
- parts of regional and rural network

The majority of the network is in satisfactory level although upgrading operations are always planned and implemented

In 2017, one of the most dangerous segments of PATHE passing through the valley of Tempe has been bypassed by the completion of T2 tunnel, total length of 6km, upgrading thus the road safety level and at the same time, reducing travel time.

A strict legal framework is in effect until 2019, which does not allow bus drivers to pick up passengers from another Regional Unit, even if they do not need to deviate from their regular course to do so. However, the Greek government is working on a legislative and regulatory framework that will allow competition earlier than foreseen (2015). This strict legal framework does not help the cooperation between the Intercity Bus Companies of different Regional Units. There is no supportive legal framework and that is the main obstacle for the cooperation between Bus Companies and the Rail Company in a form of a multimodal transportation service. The Region of Thessaly is in a privileged position concerning the rail services that can be provided to citizens, since the main rail axis of Greece is running through the Region.

B Characteristics of public transport policies for green Mobility and sustainable transport system of Thessaly region

As a result of workshop, interviews and meetings held during the visit, the Peer review team has reached the following general conclusions regarding the development of public transport- and sustainable transport policies in the region of Thessaly:

1) Since 1954 in the Region of Thessaly, great attention has been paid to the development of public transport (road). Bus connections have been developed to every village of the region, and in bigger cities and interregional express buses to main cities of Greece have been established on KTEL basis (private). The main train connection have been electrified. The use of public transport seems to be convenient for the residents.

2) The “Regional Operational Programme of Thessaly 2014 – 2020” aims to achieve: a) the reduction of greenhouse emissions (CO₂) in all areas of the region, focusing however in urban areas, including the promotion of multimodal sustainable mobility and b) the restriction of the consequences by applying specific measures. Unfortunately most of the measures are on upgrading the road infrastructure.

Additionally an Open call for public transportation (KTEL) from the Ministry of Economy and Development has been published within the ROP to strengthen businesses in the urban and interurban transport sector to adopt ITS and provide integrated passenger information services and e-ticketing. It will be open from 02/07/2019 until 30/09/2019 with a total budget of 16,2 M€ and with eligible budget of 140.000,00 € for Urban Buses companies of up to 15 buses, and of 330.000,00 € for Urban Buses companies of 16 or more buses. In the case of Intercity Urban Buses companies the quantities are 165.000,00 € for companies of up to 20 buses, and 330.000,00 € for companies with 21 or more buses.

The eligible budget lines are equipment, software, and services. The possible actions are the following ones:

- Smart ticketing systems
- Systems for optimization of routing
- Telematics & passenger information systems
- Infotainment systems
- WI-FI on Board
- Certification of Services

3) The dispersion of urban centers, due the increase of residential areas in the periphery of cities and in the municipalities of metropolitan areas make it difficult for citizens to access work areas by public transport, increasing the use of private vehicles. As well there are no special priority lanes for public transport modes, neither specific restrictions to enter urban centers with private vehicle. There is a weakness in the public transport service, affected by the vicious circle that involves competition of different KTEL companies among them, as well as competition with the private vehicle. In addition, the existence of numerous taxi services and individuals to meet the demand in schedules not served by public transport services. Therefore, public transport only attends to captive demand and is presented as uncompetitive compared to the automobile.

4) There are different but isolated initiatives to enhance the public sustainable transport system, as the project and app “Green your move”, or the Trikala experience fact, the city of Trikala is the main nucleus where new ideas (EnertMOB ...) to make public transport more sustainable and attractive are born.

At the current stage, the main actions to improve mobility in Thessaly Region are:

- Promotion of sustainable mobility and elimination of problems at the transport infrastructure.
- Support of the regional mobility by connecting the regional transport networks with the TEN-T
- Operational upgrade of the interregional road networks in order to be connected with the intraregional road network.
- Upgrade of the existing infrastructure at the ports of the region.
- Connection of specific areas (rural areas) and areas of touristic and cultural interest with the main road network and the TEN-T corridors.

On level of the private transport providers the following measures are foreseen:

- Electronic tracking and management of bus fleet
- Electronic boards for information in central stations
- Automatic ticket and smart card vending machines
- QR Devices and smart card readers for ticket offices
- Buses with EURO 6 engines
- Identification of luggage

Weaknesses and problems identified during the review what need to be considered for improvement of the situation of public transport in the Thessaly region:

1. Main identified problem is probably the current National Legislation, which is complex and allow little flexibility to promote cooperation among bus companies among themselves and other transport companies.
2. Second main problem is the fragmentation of the public transport into all kind of private companies with ownership of those companies by bus owners and drivers, that allow little space for renewing fleets (it is allowed a maximum age of 27 years for the buses) and/or innovation
3. Existing public transport system has limited service hours and limited interoperability with other public transport providers. The transport in rural areas is deficient.

Therefore, the only way to reduce losses is to reduce costs, which implies a low quality service, and consequently, it is used only because there is no other alternative.

4. It seems to be an important part of the population that uses bike as a mean of transport, though there is not a proper cycle network. Cycles and pedestrians often share the same space even at peak times, due to the lack of alternative options for cycling.

Finally: There are a lot of measures and initiatives for a sustainable urban transport, innovation, infrastructures, energy efficiency and sustainable mobility. The public transport services are facing the dispersion of the towns and city sprawl, the high captivity of the traveler (it does not have another way of transport) and a cultural problem of the irrational use of private vehicles. In conclusion, the use of public transport in the rural area of Thessaly is currently very small and low. There are some successful experiences such as GreenYourMove project or Trikala experience with different activities, which must be extended to other areas. The combination for low demand lines and high demand lines allow local bus companies to cope up with the legislation and reach every municipality with at least 2 services a day, this way of combined concessions is foreseen to continue with the new legal framework, which is interesting.

C Good practices

There are several new trends and developments implemented across Europe and especially in the regions participating in the OPTITRANS project, creating unique opportunities for a change in the choice of transport, better integration of different low-carbon transport modes, better ticketing options, use of ICT to react in real-time to fluctuating demands, timetable integration, higher passenger comfort and promoting better image of public transport.

During the peer review was discussed different good practices in order to solve identified weaknesses and occurred problems in the public transport system of Thessaly.

It must be reminded that the Region of Thessaly is a special case due to the geographical area that it covers and the fact that rural transport is mainly served by road Public Transport.

In next we will present just some of them which seem like a most promising practices to follow in Thessaly:

MyCicero, Abruzzo, Italy

MyCicero is a multi-channel platform - a touch-screen smartphone web - that accompanies the development of the Smart Territory. It is the place for a dynamic and transversal dialogue

between the relevant stakeholders, it is the project of integrated and sustainable development of the territorial community.

New concept of the Public Transport Network/ Bus, Thuringia, Germany

In Thuringia the difficulty is that road bound public transport is ordered and paid by the counties whereas rail bound public transport is ordered and paid by the federal government. This means there is a high need for coordination between different players to get an integrated schedule. The practice shows that an integrated concept for the restructuring of the public transport network proves feasible and successful even in regions with unfavorable framework conditions for public transport, above all low population density and a shrinking number of inhabitants. Concerted measures led to a significant reduction of public subsidies needed to cover the operational costs, while the level of service improved at the same time. As a result, the number of passenger increased. Experiences made in the County are an encouraging example that a well-planned and demand oriented public transport network is a valid tool to raise the modal share of public transport also in rural and peripheral areas.

Upgrade and extensions of the public transport system in Cluj, Nord-Vest, Romania

The project is a good practice for the upgrade of public transport by introducing the electronic ticketing system and creating public transport stations equipped with electronic display boards, which has led to an increase in the quality of public service, having a positive impact on the quality of life for the residents of Cluj Napoca and its metropolitan area. The project can be a good practice model for other cities / regions, in terms of increasing the mobility of the inhabitants, based on the introduction of modern taxation and tariff integration systems.

Public transport and electronic ticketing in Tartu, Estonia

The Tartu City Government has signed the Memorandum of Understanding (other parties include the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, Road Administration, AS Eesti Liinirongid) to create a contact-free payment system according to international standards in public transport. The city of Tartu has set a goal of increasing the share of public transport users (including bus traffic), pedestrians and cyclists. To do this, it is adamant to take people's need into account when organizing public transport. The main problem is with the sparse bus schedules. Routes are usually long, and combined with a sparse schedule, it makes using public transport more time consuming than commuting with private vehicles.

D Policy context

The focus of Thessaly region within the OptiTrans project is set on sustainable transport. This was also the main focus point of peers during of the review visit. Peers have learnt during the visit next:

- a. The main objective in the region is to enhance and increase the quality of public transport and thus get more people out of cars. Policies supporting this issue on local, regional and national level are not so clear and in most cases seem to be in contradiction to the vision. Funds and measures for financing sustainable transport solutions mainly come from private organization (KTEL) or via EU-funded projects.
- b. In the Thessaly region strong stakeholders to promote sustainable transport and having influence in designing policy instruments – seem not to exist.
- c. In addition associations like, Associations of the bicycle or customer boards are not existing and thus could not lobby for their needs.
- d. Transport system of the Thessaly metropolitan area is organized on provincial level with bus-companies which serve the provincial area, inter city lines as well as bigger cities. Cooperation on regional level is rather sparse.
- e. Mentioned policies don't have specific indicators for the Thessaly region in context of sustainable transportation but in general the commitment is clear and accepted by all involved parties.

Detailed information about this section can be found in the annexes of this document.

E Positive examples

During the visit, the Peer review team introduced various transport solutions and also took on technical issues. Here we would like to highlight two solutions that other regions in Europe could take as a model

1) Bus hubs as multimodal station with additional services - Trikkala bus station is a very good example of how a successful multimodal hub can be planned and provides many services commuters would like to have (Park and Ride, Luggage Shelters, Hotel, Shops ...).



2) Bike shelters at bus hubs (e.g. Karditsia) - at first glance, it seems to be a very simple and natural thing, but this small service is very valuable to improve the multimodal transport chain especially for commuters which live in cycle friendly city and have to commute to work by public transport.



F Recommendations

- set up some sort of regional cooperation legislations that KTEL´s have to cooperate at least when lines are passing different territories and busses are not full.
- keep the system of ranges of ticket prices which makes it a bit more easier for the KTEL´s to run economically.
- enhance the infrastructure for cycles at least in medium and bigger towns of the region, following the Good Practice of Pesaro (Continuous, good signalling, multimodal points, addressed services):
<https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/1239/bicipolitana-pesaro/>
- Promotion of priority lanes for public transport buses within main cities
- Promotion of Regional subsidies to Public Transport Companies with minimum criteria of interconnection and/or cooperation among different companies: Integration of time tables and/or integrated platform to buy tickets, GreenYourMove integrated information, agreement on extension of some lines, among others.
- Awareness campaign among KTEL companies with specific examples of Good Practices on cooperation among Public Transport Companies and improvement of economical revenues of all companies (because of increase of passengers due to better quality transport). Good Practice of “Intermunicipal transportation association of the Central Thuringia”: <https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/118/intermunicipal-transportation-association-of-the-central-thuringia/>
- Promotion of pilot to interconnect KTEL stations to Train stations with Electrical bus and promotion of cooperation with TRAINOSE train company to integrate schedules as a first step to promote intermodality with trains.
- Start a lobbying campaign at national level to simplify laws and help introducing cooperation mechanisms among different transport operators to improve the situation of the legal framework.

F List of bibliography

- Thessaly Region Baseline Study
- OptiTrans database of Good Practices
- Presentations given within the peer review by local stakeholders
- Interviews with stakeholders

G Annex section

- Agenda of peer review visit
- Lists of participants
- Photos taken during the peer review
- Presentations from workshop

- Registration sheets
- ANNEX 1 - Feedback of Peers
- ANNEX 2 - Checklist